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## Tree Mortality Task Force Monthly Update April 2018

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The following changes have been made to the TMTF organizational structure to recognize Task Force accomplishments, Working Group objectives being met, and the evolving nature of statewide support being requested from the Task Force:
  - The Mapping and Monitoring Working Group has been folded into the Forest Health and Resilience Working Group to support their informational needs. CAL FIRE-FRAP and USFS staff will continue to update the high hazard zones, maintain the Tree Mortality Mapper, and provide other products as needed as a part of the FHRWG.
  - The Market Development Working Group (MDWG) has begun to coordinate its activities with the Rural Economic Development Steering Committee at the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. There is significant overlap in the objectives and composition of these two groups and the MDWG is evaluating the potential to merge these two groups into a single statewide effort in the near future.
  - The Resource Allocation Working Group has been demobilized. Coordination of resources will continue both locally at the County TMTFs and statewide at the full TMTF meetings. CAL FIRE units will manage the distribution and use of portable tree mortality equipment to support local hazard mitigation efforts.

TMTF members interested in serving on any of the Working Groups should contact Kristen Merrill, [Kristen.Merrill@fire.ca.gov](mailto:Kristen.Merrill@fire.ca.gov), to be added to their email distribution list.

- On January 19, 2018, the CPUC adopted the final CPUC Fire-Threat Map. The adopted CPUC Fire-Threat Map, together with the map of TMTF's Tier 1 HHZs, comprise the High Fire-Threat District Map where stricter fire-safety regulations apply. The maps, zipped GIS maps, and further explanation can be found at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/firethreatmaps/>. An [interactive map](#) is also available.
- California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) is accepting applications for 2018 wildfire prevention grants. Of the available grants, CFSC has approximately \$1.3 million for the Tree Mortality Grant program to be distributed within the 10 Tree Mortality Counties. The application deadline is May 15, 2018 at 5 p.m. PDT. Visit <http://www.cafiresafecouncil.org/2018-grant-program/> for more information and to apply.



- The table below depicts the number of trees removed through March 31, 2018.

<u>Area/Unit/County/Agency</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Trees Removed</u>
USFS	Mar-18	555,200
CAL FIRE	Mar-18	43,622
Caltrans	Feb-18	111,233
Priority Counties	Mar-18	30,629
PG&E	Mar-18	395,683
SCE	Mar-18	106,765
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,243,132</b>

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS and WORKSHOPS**

- The May 14 meeting of the Tree Mortality Task Force (TMTF) has been cancelled to allow TMTF Leadership to interact with Interim Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, Vicki Christiansen, during her planned visit to California on May 14. The next meeting of the Task Force will be Monday, June 11 from 1:00-3:00 P.M.
- The Sierra Institute for Community and Environment and the US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region are hosting a two-day meeting, May 7-8 in Sacramento to further triple-bottom line (community, economy, environment) approaches to forest restoration. The [Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement \(SCALE\)](#) network offers an opportunity for collaboratives and the Forest Service to collectively identify strategies to achieve landscape-scale, cross-boundary restoration of healthy, resilient forests.
- On June 8 and 9, USFS, CAL FIRE, and Sierra Pacific Industries, in conjunction with the UC Cooperative Extension, are sponsoring a [hazardous fuels treatment demonstration](#) focused on conventional and innovative technologies capable of operating on steep terrain (30% plus slope). The demo will be held on Sierra Pacific Industries managed lands near Ice House, California. The target audience includes fire agencies, natural resource managers, electric utilities, water conservation districts, homeowner associations, fire safe councils, county and city planning departments, fuels treatment contractors, and other stakeholders.

## **WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

### **Forest Health and Resilience (Pete Cafferata/ Stewart McMorrow)**

- The Mapping and Monitoring Working Group merged with the Forest Health and Resilience Working Group, effective April 9, 2018. MMWG members are encouraged to attend the next meeting of the FHRWG on May 2 at 2:00 p.m., in Room 1305 of the Resources Building.



- [The Reforestation story map](#) has been updated with a 2017 seed zone impact map illustrating the extent of the tree mortality across the seed zones that intersect the 10 High Priority Counties. The amount of total tree mortality was calculated and is displayed as a percent within each seed zone. A [printable map](#) is also available.
- The third FHRWG white paper titled “Synthesis of Relevant Studies Exploring the Long-Term Outlook for Sierra Nevada Forests following the Current Bark Beetle Epidemic” will be completed in May. Kelly Larvie and Tadashi Moody are modeling areas most likely to experience type conversions from mixed-conifer forest to shrub lands. The goal is to submit the paper to a scientific journal such as *Ecosystems* or *Forest Ecology and Management*.
- The revised draft CAL FIRE reforestation strategy includes four main topic areas: evaluation and monitoring, reforestation resources, reforestation and forest management education, and cooperation and communication. A forest restoration guidebook will be developed for Sierra Nevada forestland owners implementing reforestation and management projects. CAL FIRE is reviewing California Climate Hub’s proposal to produce a 40-50-page reforestation resource for landowners who want to reforest and manage their forestland with an emphasis on managing for resilience, focusing on forests impacted or potentially impacted by extensive tree mortality. The plan is to have Dr. Peter Stine, retired Research Ecologist from the USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station, write the document (completing it by the end of 2018).
- The Seed Zone Map Update Group will meet from 1-3 p.m. on May 29 in Davis. Dr. Sarah Bisbing, Univ. of Nevada, will review her recent CAL FIRE-funded project. Drs. Jessica Wright and Jim Thorne will discuss their efforts to create provisional, climate-based seed transfer guidelines. The group will also discuss the coming cone season and efforts to coordinate data collection and storage between USFS and CAL FIRE seed banks.
- The Sierra Nevada Science Coordination Group continues to catalog tree mortality research and monitoring efforts in the Sierra Nevada through its [online geodatabase](#). The goal is to identify knowledge gaps and future research needs. To date, 22 researchers have provided data in 104 polygons. This total has not increased significantly in the past month despite a second call for participation that included a video tutorial. The Coordination Group members intend to connect directly with a group of high-priority researchers in an attempt to increase the response rate. When sufficient data have been received, the Coordination Group will determine how to best summarize the findings for the benefit of current field researchers.
- The FHRWG continues to discuss concepts for future FHRWG projects. In April, the group explored using the FHRWG to further the use of prescribed fire for smaller landowners. Len Nielson, CAL FIRE, presented on CAL FIRE’s [Vegetation Management Program](#) (VMP), one of several of the Department’s fuels reduction-related programs. The VMP is a cost-sharing program that focuses on the use of prescribed fire, and some mechanical means, for addressing wildland fire fuel hazards and other resource management issues on SRA.



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## **Regulations**

**(Matthew Reischman/ Jamie Sammut)**

- The RWG continues to work with Caltrans and USFS regarding permitting of hazard tree removal projects along roads and highways. Caltrans has requested clarification and standardization in permit acquisition.
- The RWG discussed options involved with facilitating biomass removal to support biomass facilities. The RWG will consult the Bioenergy Working Group on the issues.

## **Mapping and Monitoring**

**(Mark Rosenberg/ Kayanna Warren)**

- The Mapping and Monitoring Work Group of has been folded into the Forest Health and Resilience Working Group (FHRWG). Thank you to all those that have participated and helped the Working Group achieve the objectives outlined in the TMTF Incident Action Plan. USFS and CAL FIRE-FRAP will continue to update the high hazard zones, map tree mortality projects and temporary storage facilities, and provide other products as needed as a part of the FHRWG. All MMWG members are encouraged to attend the next meeting of the FHRWG, May 2 at 2 p.m. in Room 1305 of the Resources Building. Contact [Pete Cafferata](#) for more details.
- CAL FIRE-FRAP, USFS, and TMTF staff are in the process of updating the Facts and Figures document with the 2017 ADS data.
- CAL FIRE-FRAP staff are analyzing tree mortality data along the State Highway System for Caltrans.

## **Utilization – Bioenergy**

**(Angie Lottes)**

- Carmen Tubbesing and Jose Lara from UC Berkeley presented their work assessing bioenergy potential from dead tree biomass in California. They have [quantified and mapped the standing dead biomass](#) that has resulted from recent tree die-off, and have developed a method for filtering that biomass by harvest feasibility and generating unique cost curves for each ~20 ac area of mortality. This research facilitates assessments of bioenergy potential at fine spatial resolution across California.
- The CPUC and PG&E received three responses to the Request for Interest from firms with the capabilities to complete High Hazard Zone Availability (HHZ) Study. The study is meant to reveal HHZ fuel availability as it pertains to BioRAM facilities and barriers to increasing availability.



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## **Utilization – Market Development**

**(Evan Johnson/Bob Kingman)**

- The Market Development Working Group has begun discussions on transitioning its efforts to other standing workgroups and is developing a lessons-learned document to capture and catalog opportunities, remaining challenges, and future guidance related to developing markets for beetle-killed pine.

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## **Partner Updates**

- The 10 High Priority counties are in the process of increasing the pace and scale of hazard tree removal with funding provided through Cal OES' California Disaster Assistance Act and CAL FIRE's Local Assistance for Tree Mortality Grant Program. As of April 9, nearly all the counties had hired contractors to manage their local tree mortality projects and all ten counties had hazard tree removal projects underway.
- On January 19, 2018, the CPUC adopted the final CPUC Fire-Threat Map. The adopted CPUC Fire-Threat Map, together with the map of TMTF's Tier 1 HHZs, comprise the High Fire-Threat District Map where stricter fire-safety regulations apply. The maps, zipped GIS maps, and further explanation can be found at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/firethreatmaps/>. An [interactive map](#) is also available.